

VZCZCXRO9168  
PP RUEHBZ RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #1787/01 3220441  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 180441Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9193  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001787

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, AF A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [US](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: MINISTER AL-SAMANI ON UNAMID, BILATERAL COOPERATION

REFTEL: KHARTOUM 1782

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Meeting with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Wasila al-Samani on November 15, CDA Fernandez strongly cautioned the minister that while his visit to Washington in September and Foreign Minister Lam Akol's UNGA visit later that month had produced some positive results, the bilateral relationship was still difficult. Sudanese obstacles to UNAMID deployment, whether bureaucratic hiccups or intentional obstructionism, were causing significant concern in the international community, he said, and would impact U.S.-Sudanese relations. Al-Samani raised VP Salva Kiir's visit as a source of contention, but agreed that U.S. and Sudan must continue to find areas of cooperation. End summary.

-----  
UNAMID DELAYS HURT SUDAN,  
EXTEND THE NGO MORATORIUM  
-----

2. (SBU) CDA told al-Samani that hindering UN/AU efforts to facilitate UNAMID deployment ran counter to Sudanese national interests; "even Ban Ki Moon is complaining about you," CDA said. CDA pointed out the seizure of communications equipment and the refusal of visas for Dyncorps employees as particular examples. CDA noted that Washington and New York produced weekly internal reports on UNAMID deployment, and every week new problems were documented. "It's death by a thousand cuts," CDA said. CDA also raised the recent seizure of UN/AU vehicles and radios at El Fasher airport, and the fact that Sudan had not yet approved the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) list. He noted that "if you are doing this on purpose, you are playing a dangerous game."

3. (SBU) CDA also pressed al-Samani on the necessity of extending the moratorium on NGO activities (set to expire on January 31, 2008). He advised al-Samani not to take the typical Sudanese obstructionist path of waiting until the very last minute to approve the extension and using the Zoe's Ark scandal as a distraction. Moving to the broader relationship, CDA urged al-Samani to "truly work with us" to improve bilateral cooperation.

-----  
INTERNATIOANAL COMMUNITY UNCOOPERATIVE,  
RAISING SUDANESE SUSPICIONS  
-----

4. (SBU) Responding to CDA, al-Samani complained that the AU, UN and UNAMID didn't follow established guidelines when requesting things like customs clearances and other bureaucratic matters. (Note: Al-Samani cited an old example of Jan Pronk protesting the seizure of two crates of chickens in the middle of the avian flu crisis, though he hadn't provided any health certificates for the birds. End note.) Low-level Sudanese customs clerks didn't know how to work with international agencies, al-Samani claimed; "you can't compare us with other countries!" On the issue of the seized goods in El Fasher, al-Samani said that had been resolved and suggested that CDA call Joint Special Representative Adada if he needed verification.

15. (SBU) CDA suggested that if the Sudanese wanted to counter the impression that they were obstructing UNAMID efforts, they should produce a public record of all the visas they'd processed, all the shipments they'd allowed in since the passage of UNSCR 1769. Al-Samani seemed to agree, and asked CDA for US assistance. "We need your help to show that not every impediment is a matter of policy," he said. Al-Samani bemoaned the fact that many in the international community, including the U.S., were actively looking for areas in which to criticize and "trap" the Sudanese. He said that these problems were and could be resolved. Al-Samani recalled that he had been able to clear a backlog of 1200 UN containers at Port Sudan this summer after a matter of days; "it was all a misunderstanding."

16. (SBU) Al-Samani cited Vice President Salva Kiir's current visit to Washington as an example of poor cooperation. "You should have waited for a response from us before going ahead," he said. The Sudanese had no interest in banning any meetings, he continued, but the U.S. needed to communicate with the Sudanese government as a whole, and not solely with favored individuals. CDA countered al-Samani, noting that the Embassy had sent a dipnote to the MFA previewing the visit weeks earlier. But Kiir knew of the visit well in advance, al-Samani insisted, before the government had received any official notice. The U.S. had invited John Garang, Minni Minawa and Rebecca Garang to Washington, al-Samani said; why not others who had also signed peace agreements? Al-Samani said he wanted to change the minds of hardliners within the Sudanese government who accused the U.S. of being duplicitous and not interested in even trying to improve relations. He raised the recent scandal involving the French NGO Zoe's Ark (REFTEL), claiming that hardliners were asking themselves that if the French, a "neutral" country, could do such a thing, what was the U.S. capable of?

KHARTOUM 00001787 002 OF 002

-----  
NEED TO MOVE FORWARD  
-----

17. (SBU) The U.S. was still committed to improving the bilateral relationship, CDA assured al-Samani, and reiterated the relatively positive impact of his recent visit to Washington. He again urged al-Samani of the need to extend the NGO moratorium, advising him to set a firm date, and have a signing ceremony; "the NGOs will publicly thank you," CDA said. Al-Samani raised the possibility of a return follow-up trip to Washington, and CDA agreed, when the time was right.

18. (SBU) Comment: A non-NCP member who has thrown his lot in with the regime, Al-Samani has indeed solved many working level problems with UNAMID deployment and related issues. But no Sudanese official asks themselves the basic question: Why obstruct in the first place something you supposedly want and accept like UNSCR 1769, and what conclusions should the international community draw from this behavior? End comment.